

**DIAMOND
JUBILEE**
1963-2023



FROM CHANCELLOR JIMMY H. BAKER

Alabama's community and technical colleges were merged into one system May 3, 1963, when legislators laid the groundwork for a unified system of institutions to focus on accessible training in "arts and sciences and in useful skills and trades" for current and future labor needs. Sixty years have passed, but that important cause remains the singular purpose of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). With 24 community and technical colleges and an economic impact of \$6.6 billion, the community college system is a vital component of the state's educational and economic infrastructure.

As we celebrate our 60th Anniversary, it is important to recognize and showcase all our achievements. That's why I'm delighted to introduce the *Alabama Minute*, our quarterly, printable newsletter that highlights the impactful work of our faculty and staff, the successes of our students, and the industry partnerships we're building to establish ourselves as Alabama's premier workforce entity.

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Photo courtesy of BuildUP Community School.

Community partnership results in Birmingham student's success as a 21-yr-old homeowner

A partnership between a Birmingham-based community organization and the Alabama Community College System was a gateway to workforce training and homeownership for one Birmingham man.

Torrey Washington, 21, is the first homeowner of BuildUP Community School, a program that helps disadvantaged teens revitalize struggling neighborhoods. BuildUP Executive Director James Sutton said the program is the nation's first and only early-college workforce development high school. Washington praised BuildUP and Lawson State Community College for helping him get hands-on with flipping his first property in Birmingham.

Washington used his advanced manufacturing

training to learn more about rehabbing homes, including the one he now owns. During the training, another mission crossed his mind: Washington became an HVAC specialist helping to build innovative modular structures for BLOX.

"That's when I met Jeffrey Rayford and Brian Moore," said Washington. "They were my instructors at Lawson State. I'm just very grateful I met them. They've both been huge inspirations to me."

"My end goal," said Washington, "is to get to the point where I'm financially stable and able to truly stand on my own two feet and help others the same way my teachers, instructors, and co-workers have helped me."

"Having Torrey as the

first is a great impact on the school," said BuildUP Executive Director James Sutton. "It gives young high schoolers in Birmingham a vision of success and a picture of finishing what you start, carrying something all the way through from beginning to end."

Hear more about this fascinating story on our latest podcast series, **Access Granted!** Tune in now on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.



More than \$522 million dedicated to building, improving workforce training facilities



The Alabama Legislature established the System 60 years ago. Thanks to the leadership and support of Governor Kay Ivey and the Legislature, over \$522 million of new funding was approved that will allow the 24 community and technical colleges of the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) to make much-needed facility upgrades and enhancements, including the construction of new workforce training centers.

Every community college in Alabama obtained funding for improvement projects that help address construction needs for top-level training facilities. Colleges like Gadsden State received funding to construct state-of-the-art Advanced Manufacturing and Workforce Skills training centers. The \$12 million set aside in the supplemental budget for Gadsden State was made possible due to the support and advocacy of Alabama legislators.

The center's construction is supported by Rep. Ginny Shaver (R-Leesburg), who believes it will have a meaningful impact on the lives of real people. She was a former Gadsden State student.

"By providing first-class facilities and workforce training opportunities for our citizens, Gadsden State is assisting the next generation of industrial and manufacturing leaders," said Shaver.

Funding also supports equipment upgrades and the expansion of workforce development initiatives statewide. For more information, visit accs.edu/impact.

Photo: Construction of the Advanced Manufacturing and Workforce Skills Training Center at Gadsden State.

Alabama's six Historically Black Community Colleges become first inducted into national scholarship organization

Residents attending any of Alabama's six Historically Black Community Colleges (HBCCs) will now have access to more scholarships and professional development opportunities through a national

partnership with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf).

Alabama's HBCCs are the first Historically Black Community Colleges to be inducted into the TMCf, including Bishop, Drake, Gadsden, Lawson, Shelton, and Trenholm State Community Colleges.

Named after the U.S. Supreme Court's first Black justice, TMCf is a nationally recognized nonprofit membership organization that supports more than 50 historically black colleges. To date, TMCf has provided more than \$300 million in scholarships, programmatic and capacity building support to its member schools and students.

"HBCCs play a critical role in local and regional economic development by offering workforce upskilling and reskilling programs," said TMCf President and CEO

Dr. Harry Williams. "HBCCs across the country offer associate degrees and industry-recognized certificates and credentials that can launch students into the workforce to fill skilled positions that offer good pay without the requirement of a bachelor's degree."

Alabama is home to more HBCCs and HBCUs than any other state. The Alabama Community College System's 24 community and technical colleges add \$6.6 billion to Alabama's economy, supporting one out of every 27 jobs in the state.

Photo: Sharde Tate - 2023 Drake State electrical technology graduate (and former Frontiers Research Program/NASA intern) working with a DOBOT CR16 collaborative robot.



Alabama Community College System celebrates long-serving employees

More than 200 employees across the Alabama Community College System have dedicated at least three decades serving students and helping their communities thrive. The System is deeply grateful for employees who have been with us for a long time, as they offer invaluable benefits and contribute to a positive work environment. We appreciate their continued commitment to Alabama's community colleges.

Staff members like Ernest Grace at Reid State Technical College understand their college's culture inside and out. Grace said he adores his career and has "done some of everything. I like what I'm doing."

Grace began his career at Reid State as a trowel trades student. After graduating in 1972, Grace worked as a maintenance crew member at the college for more than 47 years and hasn't missed more than two days of work, which is remarkable. He's one of the longest-serving, active employees in the ACCS.

Grace's contributions have helped the college maintain its splendor and appeal to students, faculty, staff, and the community.

A quick word of advice from this veteran employee – "Be consistent in what you're doing. Enjoy it."

Congratulations to all long-serving employees across the state.

Photo: Reid State maintenance crew member Ernest Grace.



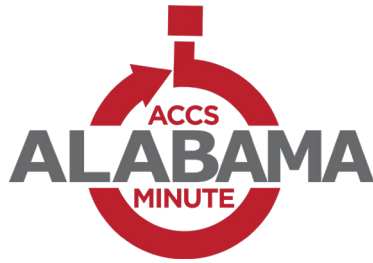
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celebrations as one unified system.

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ACCs athlete Kade Snell: National Baseball Player of the Year

More than 130 teams across 13 sports engage more than 2,500 athletes at Alabama community and technical colleges, and the nation takes note. Rawlings Sports and the American Baseball Coaches Association recently named Wallace Community College-Dothan athlete Kade Snell the 2023 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Baseball Player of the Year.

Snell is the first player from Wallace Community College-Dothan to earn this title and is believed to be the only athlete in recent years from Alabama to be honored with this prestigious award.

"That's awesome," said Snell. "I'm just so thankful for the opportunity that Wallace gave me. . . My time at junior college was everything I could have ever needed. It was the needed push for my baseball career. I'll always be a Gov for life!"

Snell was 10-0 on the mound this past season and led the state with 87 strikeouts. Wallace athletic director Dr. Ryan Spry said Snell is an exceptional student on and off the field.

"Kade is such a unique talent, with the ability to compete at an All-American caliber on the mound, in the field, and at the plate," said Dr. Spry. "His abilities were on full display this spring, and I'm absolutely thrilled that he is being recognized for his outstanding season."

Sports at colleges within the Alabama Community College System include men's and women's basketball; volleyball; cross-country; golf; baseball; softball and e-sports. The continued effort to add programs gives the Alabama Community College Conference a greater presence in the state and NJCAA.

